



## Multi-nation communications test set for July in Pretoria, South Africa

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia — More than 25 African and European nations gathered here in February for a three-day concept planning conference for exercise Africa Endeavor 06, which is slated for July 2006 in Pretoria, South Africa.

It will be the first major U.S.-sponsored forum in Africa to focus on the ability of coalition communication systems.

"Interoperability is the call for our forces in a forward-deployed situation," said Bereng Mtkimulu, director of the African Union's Peace Support Operations Division.

With the support of the African Union, U.S. and African military communicators finalized their concept plans to be tested in July with the end goal of better supporting the African Union and its African Standby Force.

U.S. European Command modeled Africa Endeavor after Combined Endeavor, a NATO and Partnership for Peace exercise held annually in Europe for the past seven years. Combined Endeavor allows the alliance's members to test and improve the ability of the various nations' communications equipment to work together.

The experiences and lessons learned from past Combined Endeavor exercises has and continues to lead to coalition successes in military deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan as well as for humanitarian efforts such as the recent earthquake

in Pakistan, said Army Lt. Col. Kevin Warthon, exercise director.

"Collectively and cooperatively, Africa will take ownership of Africa Endeavor," Colonel Warthon said. "U.S. European Command can offer years of Combined Endeavor success stories, but in the end, the interoperability test document that is developed will be based on Africa's peace support operations."

During the Addis Ababa planning conference, nations presented detailed information on their respective military missions as well as their command, control and communications capabilities and shortfalls. This information will drive what interoperability testing they will conduct during the July exercise, Warthon said.

The U.S. Joint Interoperability Test Command from Fort Huachuca, Ariz., will assist during African Endeavor with testing and follow-up documentation.

After an assessment of the capabilities during the exercise, U.S. European Command officials will help establish a baseline for interoperability among the participating nations, Warthon explained. In the past, several African nations observed or participated in Combined Endeavor exercises where they gained a greater understanding of proven coalition communication standards. (U.S. European Command Release)

**This is the first major  
U.S.-sponsored forum  
in Africa to focus  
on coalition comm  
systems**